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ASIAN PERSPECTIVES ON SOLIDARITY FOR EAST TIMOR

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Before talking about our perspectives on solidarity for East Timor, I can not but start with the story of my own country. Korea underwent one of the worst form of colonial domination in the not-so-distant past. Just at the time of emerging from suzerain domination by China, my country was invaded and colonized by Japan which was equipped with advanced weapons. Our people fell into slavery. What this meant in those times was no right to object whatever cruelties were inflicted. Participation in the independence movement led to torture and death in addition to the endless pursuit and persecution of whole families. Representatives of the people who sought support of other countries had to become endless wanderers abroad and were often unwelcome visitors. Many powerful countries which preached the gospel of humanism were busy securing secret treaties with Japan. They thereby succeeded in grasping rights and privileges by selling the right to self-determination of the Korean people to Japan.

In this context, I must confess my shame to East Timorese who are in almost the same situation as we were in the past. Korean people are morally obliged to stand in solidarity with East Timorese people because we share the experience of foreign occupation. Our people, who are proud of their riches, forgot their past sufferings. I am ashamed that my country has indulged only in self-development and has been indifferent to the anguish of other people such as East Timorese.

Many peoples in Asia and the Pacific, including Koreans, similarly underwent unspeakable hardships from colonial domination or foreign occupation. From these experiences they keenly realize that foreign occupation automatically means total negation of human dignity and leads to the enslavement of whole people of one nation by another.

The state of enslavement in which all human rights are negated should be differentiated from the state of human rights infringement. When certain human rights are infringed, we can recover the victims's dignity by guaranteeing the violated rights. However, when a person is enslaved, every effort to protect the victim's human rights, civil, political, economic, social and cultural, means nothing without liberation from slavery. Without liberation and guaranteeing the right to self-determination, they are still slaves and human dignity is negated. Whatever rich food, luxurious clothing and comfortable housing one enjoys, it will be a contempt of dignity, without liberation. Without liberation, a slave will never become a human being.

We all know that the right to self-determination is not a panacea. It will not automatically solve so many problems which

will be raised after liberation. However, this right is a key to open the door to the road which transforms a slave into a human being. This right is a starting point of coping with every problem. Without guaranteeing the right to self-determination, human development in its true sense can not start.

No law can justify the enslavement. The 'law and order' imposed by the aggressor to the occupied people is not the law and order in its genuine meaning but the farce of a slave hunter. Any claims to justify foreign occupation or to support the aggressor are without grounds. Governing policies such as preventing the spread of different thoughts, setting friendly relations with a strong neighboring state, securing a market or economic interest from an oil field in a continental shelf, etc., can not justify deprivation of other people's right to self-determination. Invasion and occupation of an other country and people is nothing but a typical form of war crimes and crimes against humanity. Conniving at the atrocities practiced in support of the invader is, at best, merely a conspiracy of crimes against humanity.

In this context, all the nations and peoples have their own duty in solving this unjustifiable situation. Those who experienced colonization in the past and became independent are obliged to support other people who suffer similar hardships. Those who inflicted pain by invading and occupying other people and countries should rather make a greater effort to get rid of colonialism. By the same token, the country which, having experienced colonization, is now invading, occupying and colonizing its neighboring countries and peoples must be criticized much more strongly. This country commits more than the deprivation of whole human rights of the victimized people. It denies its people's past struggles and thereby negates their human dignity.

The first and most important lesson we have learned from the history of World War II is that any form of colonial domination or foreign occupation, without exception, poses serious threats to the peace of the world and to the human rights of whole human beings. We also learned that such a serious threat to the peace and human dignity can be overcome only by the strenuous struggle of the oppressed together with support and solidarity of the peace-loving peoples of the world. Therefore we believe that we have the moral duty to work together to oppose and fight against colonial domination and foreign occupation in every circumstances and with all our efforts. Our unified voices will contribute to the brighter future of world peace and human rights. As a member of this global community, I feel deep sorrow and anger about the Indonesian occupation of East Timor. I am angry at the crime of greed against the peace and human rights of the world. It is also lamentable that the Indonesian government with continued colonialism degrades the human dignity of its own people, by making them but slave masters.

I would like to finish my address with the Korean people's greetings of encouragement and solidarity to the East Timorese people. We firmly believe that you will not discontinue your struggle against the Indonesian invasion inspite of undescribable adversity, because you all know that acceptance of enslavement

means abandonment of your human dignity. Your struggle is not yours alone. Dear East Timorese people, you are exploring a new dimension of the world history. With your determined struggle, you are awakening the conscience of the whole world including Indonesians. You are contributing to the establishment of a world community where the human dignity of all human beings is guaranteed. The darker the night, the brighter the dawn. On with the struggle.